

Message Text

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ACTION ACDA-10

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9124

INFO AMEMBASSY QUITO PRIORITY

USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L USUN 453

USMISSION GENEVA FOR USDEL NPT PREPCOM

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: UN EC PARM

SUBJ: NPT PREPCOM: POSSIBLE BENITES CANDIDACY

REF: GENEVA 0812

1. AMB BENITES, ECUADOR'S PERMREP HERE SINCE EARLY 60'S, WAS NOT A STRONG OR PARTICULARLY EFFECTIVE PRESIDENT OF 28TH UNGA IN 1973 OR OF UNGA SPECIAL SESSION LAST SPRING. NEVERTHELESS, WE WORKED SUCCESSFULLY WITH HIM ON MANY IMPORTANT ISSUES AND, AS A RESULT, HE MADE SEVERAL RULINGS (E.G. KHMER CREDENTIALS, SOUTH AFRICA) VERY MUCH IN OUR FAVOR DURING 1973 SESSION. US DEL HAD TO CULTIVATE BENITES CAREFULLY TO WORK OUT A SATISFACTORY RELATIONSHIP SINCE BENITES TENDS TO BE TEMPERAMENTAL AND RANK CONSCIOUS AND IS APPARENTLY UNABLE OR UNWILLING TO SPEAK ENGLISH. US DEL GENERALLY TOOK LEAD IN RAISING ISSUES OF GREAT IMPORTANCE TO US WITH HIM SINCE BENITES KNOWN TO MAKE DECISIONS WITHOUT CONSULTING WITH MOST DIRECTLY AFFECTED PARTIES OR WITH UN SECRETARIAT.

2. IN TWO SPEECHES DEALING WITH DISARMAMENT AT THE
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29TH UNGA, BENITES CLAIMED THAT NPT HAS "DANGEROUS LOOPHOLE IN

THAT ONLY DIFFERENCE BETWEEN NUCLEAR EXPLOSION FOR PEACEFUL PURPOSE AND FISSION BOMBS IS MORAL INTENTION OF USER," URGED 1975 NPT CONFERENCE TO "SERIOUSLY CONSIDER DANGERS OF PROLIFERATION OF SMALL TACTICAL NUCLEAR WEAPONS," AND CRITICIZED "VERTICAL PROLIFERATION" BY SUPERPOWERS AS EVEN MORE DANGEROUS THAN "HORIZONTAL PROLIFERATION" WHICH NPT TRIES TO PREVENT. BENITES IN GENERAL TOOK SEVERAL VERBAL SWIPES AT "TWO NUCLEAR SUPERPOWERS" AND IDENTIFIED HIMSELF WITH EFFORTS OF MEXICAN PERMREP GARCIA ROBLES TO PROMOTE WORLD DISARMAMENT CONFERENCE.

3. IN SPITE OF BENITES DIFFICULT PERSONALITY AND GENERALLY WEAK LEADERSHIP, WE BELIEVE IT WOULD BE DANGEROUS FOR US TO BE INVOLVED IN ANY EFFORT TO BLOCK HIS CHAIRMANSHIP OF NPT PREPCOM IF HE SHOULD ACTIVELY SEEK POST. BENITES IS ECUADOR'S MOST SENIOR DIPLOMAT AND HAS CONSIDERABLE STANDING WITHIN LA GROUP IN NEW YORK AND GENEVA. HE PLANS TO RETIRE AS ECUADOR'S PERMREP AT END OF MONTH AND NPT PREPCOM MAY WELL BE HIS DIPLOMATIC SWAN SONG. GIVEN EXTREME SENSITIVITY OF LA GROUP MEMBERS TO ANY ALLEGED US MEDDLING IN THEIR AFFAIRS (INCLUDING CANDIDACIES), EVEN SUSPICION BY THEM THAT US ATTEMPTING TO BLOCK BENITES CANDIDACY COULD HAVE VERY ADVERSE EFFECT ON OUR EFFORTS AT NEXT UNGA SESSION TO SEEK LA VOTES ON KEY ISSUES.

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